

Cavalier Building Designation Report



Louisville Metro Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission

November 3, 2012

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Location

Situated in the Portland neighborhood, the Cavalier Building is located just northeast corner of the intersection of 26th Street and West Market St at 2551 W. Market Street. The property is comprised of one commercial building on a lot encompassing approximately .22 acres of land.



Description

The Cavalier Building is a modest Italianate-style, two-and-a-half story, masonry, corner commercial building that was constructed circa 1876. The most prominent feature of the south facing facade is the characteristic storefront. The three-bay storefront is divided by three engaged pilasters and a free-standing column marking the corner store entrance in the west bay. The main entrance is recessed into the west bay of the storefront and sits at angle to the column. Two plate glass windows fill the east and central bay of the facade which are resting on wood bulkheads. A frieze for the sign board runs across the length of the facade which is surmounted by a projecting stone cornice.

The balance of the facade is characterized by elongated window openings on the second story with stone sills and lintels that project from the facade. The windows in the openings are not original and were likely replaced in the mid-20th century. These are double-hung windows with horizontal muntin bars with the balance of the window opening enclosed with wood panels. The

attic story is punctuated with round-arched window openings that are accentuated by an arched brick pattern and stone sills. The windows are no longer extant in these openings but were likely a casement or fixed style. The roof line is defined by a projecting cornice that continues down the length of the west elevation.

The west façade features three side entrances. The original doors have been replaced. One of the entrances retains the historic wood door surround with Italianate bracketing and door hood. Window openings are located on the second and attic stories. The arched brick pattern above the attic windows is repeated along this elevation. A ghost sign is located on the second story of the west elevation. Three brick chimney stacks with corbelled brick align along the west elevation piercing the roof line. An original, two-story, ell projects from the rear of the main block which is visible along the west elevation.

The east elevation is devoid of articulation since it served as a parti wall for an adjacent building that burned. The ghost outline of this building is still visible on the east elevation. Terra cotta coping runs along the parapet wall of the east elevation.

The rear (north) elevation also is modest in architectural detailing. A circa 1920s brick garage addition was attached to the north elevation of the ell, but has since been demolished. The ghost outline of this addition is still visible. The upper story of this elevation has a stucco finish and three window openings, as well as two chimney flues. Two of the rear windows appear to be original with a 2/2 double-hung sash window and all three openings have stone sills.

The remainder of the parcel is now vacant land, though other buildings were previously associated with the property.

History

Portland History

Portland was once an independent port town that rivaled both Louisville and Shippingport for river commerce in the early 19th century. In 1811, General William Lytle of Cincinnati surveyed 3000 acres of land purchased from Henry Clay and Fortunatus Cosby and platted the area along the Ohio River that would become Portland. With the Falls of the Ohio creating a natural barrier, ships had no choice but to unload goods at the wharf and portage them around the falls to Louisville, where they could be shipped further up the Ohio. It was for this reason that Portland became a thriving river town and continued to be so until the late nineteenth century. The first charter of Portland was in 1834 by the Kentucky legislature. Annexation by Louisville occurred in 1837 followed by independence in 1842, and yet another annexation by Louisville in 1852.

The Portland Wharf, north of Bank Street, developed rapidly with residences, taverns, stores, and warehouses. Typical of river port cities, Portland developed a central business district with a cluster of commercial buildings with first being constructed in 1812 near the wharf. Portland's prosperous development drew new residents to settle in the town. Early settlers came to Portland from France at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In 1817, Lytle sold lots in an "enlargement" which expanded Portland's boundaries to include 13th Street on the east and 40th

Street on the west. Beginning in 1820, Portland's lots were being subdivided into smaller parcels which enabled working-class families to purchase property. By the 1850's Portland attracted many Irish settlers due to the Irish potato famine. With a burgeoning population, the area developed further to the east to 10th Street and south to Market Street (which was also referred to as Fountain Ferry Road in some sections).

While Portland was a bustling river town throughout the nineteenth century, man-made and natural changes diminished the community's role as prosperous port city. The Portland Canal, originally built in 1830, was widened to allow even large steamboats to travel easily around the Falls. The canal was deepened and widened in the 1870s to accommodate larger boats. Frequent flooding of the area was also a major factor in the flight Portland residents to other parts of Louisville, and later the construction of the flood wall would cut Portland off from the river that once gave it life. Despite these challenges, Portland maintains a distinctive identity within Louisville.

Cavalier Building History

Within the Portland district, 26th Street developed as a principal corridor linking West Market with Portland Avenue and the wharf. In 1876 August Schneider, constructed a 2.5 story masonry corner commercial building to house his business, A. Schneider & Company Grocers. The 1892 Sanborn Map shows that the Schneider's building was the first commercial enterprise at this important intersection in Portland. The address was originally 2537 West Market Street until the 1910 when the city streets were renumbered and the building became 2551 West Market Street.

The Cavalier (or Schneider) Building was originally adjacent to another commercial structure. At some point in the late-nineteenth century, August Schneider expanded his business operations to a seed and feed supply store. According to Sanborn Maps, the Louisville Railway Car House was across the street, so the feed store likely served the horses and mules that drew the trolley cars. The feed store building had an interior connection to the Schneider Grocery. This was a two-story masonry building with two storefronts. An additional two-story masonry building was connected to the feed store building and was located on rear elevation. (In the more recent times, the building was known as Jay's Department store. The building burned in the last ten years, and was subsequently demolished, as was the masonry building behind the structure).

Typical of merchants from the period, August Schneider and his family lived on the second floor of the building. According to city directories, the grocery store was located on the first floor of the building until the late 1890s. At some point, August Schneider closed the grocery business leasing the retail space to other businesses, but continued to own the building and resided upstairs.

Eventually Schneider sold the building in 1903. The city directories show that the building then was continuously utilized by grocers, saloons, and drugs stores with the exception of 1934 when it was vacant. From 1900-1901 to W.W. Wyler Grocery occupied the building. In 1902, the corner store became a saloon for the first time with the H. Bauer Saloon. In 1903, the W. Egbert Saloon opened for business. Henry Becker purchased the building in 1904 and opened the

Becker Brothers' Saloon while residing on the upper floor. The Saloon was in business until 1908. From 1909- 1911, a new grocery store opened called B.T. Jansen Grocery. From the period of 1911 to 1968, the corner commercial building served as a drug store with numerous owners including: A.E. Ratteree & Son Drug Store (1911 – 1912); A.C. Woertz Druggist (1913-1921); C.R. Newkirk Drug Store (1922 – 1933); Fine Drug Store (1935 -1960); and E & J Dispensary (1960 -1968). Since 1968, the building has been associated with the Cavalier's Inn which is a local tavern.

Significance

Corner Commercial Building Property Type

In the last half of the 19th century due to the industrialization and rapid growth of American cities, corner stores became an important source for urban residents to purchase foods and other goods. These stores became a prominent feature of outlying urban neighborhoods where access to the central market was much less convenient. These stores were situated in the heart of neighborhoods outside of the central business district. Distinguished from a row of buildings in a retail district, corner commercial buildings were individual commercial buildings embedded in an area surrounded by dwellings. According to Ellen Beasley in a catalogue from her corner store exhibition at the National Building Museum, "Prior to the advent of the refrigerator, and the automobile, groceries were bought on a day-to-day (even meal-to-meal) basis, making a trip to the corner store essential to the pattern of everyday urban life" (Ellen Beasley, *The Corner Store*, Washington, DC, National Building Museum, 1999, p.9). By the late 19th and well into the 20th century, corner stores were a central fixture in most urban areas. The typical corner store served approximately 200 residents. Given this customer base size, it is understandable why corner stores could be found every few blocks in dense urban neighborhoods.

The prominent neighborhood anchor location was strategic because corner commercial stores could serve the residential structures of the immediate area. It was normal to walk to the store and to buy in small quantities. Food storage techniques had not yet advanced to the point where families could keep perishable foods in their homes, and families therefore had to buy food such as meat and dairy on a daily or sometimes more frequent basis. Corner grocery store owners usually went to the city's central market every morning to stock up on fresh produce and meats. Residents of these outlying neighborhoods could conveniently get everything they needed by walking a short distance instead of making the trip into a city's busy downtown area. To distinguish the buildings within a residential neighborhood, the corner location was logical since that is how they were instantly recognizable in residential neighborhoods.

Corner stores were largely family owned and usually the whole family took part in the running of the shop from day to day. The long hours required to run the store, usually 12 to 16 hours a day, also meant that it made sense for the family to live above the shop, ensuring that at least one member of the family could tend the shop at all times. This also meant that it was common for women to take part in running the store, a venture that was not conventional in other businesses at that time. Women were expected to work as the store clerk or be in charge of cleaning the store, for example, all while maintaining their child-rearing and household duties as well.

Between 1870 and 1920, it is estimated that 26 million immigrants entered the United States seeking freedom and opportunity. The benefits of owning and operating a corner store were especially appealing to these immigrant families. Opening a corner store provided food security for families as well as cheaper rent since they only paid one rent for both their home and business. Since immigrants often colonized in neighborhoods where others from their home countries lived, store owners could capitalize on offering traditional food ingredients for customary meals. Female immigrants could then prepare meals just as they had in their homeland, something that would have given immigrant families comfort in an otherwise strange and unfamiliar place. Other immigrant businesses also benefited from producing customary products such as Jewish butchers who prepared Kosher meats that could be bought by Jewish families. Other businesses attracted multiethnic customers due to the popularity of a style of processing meat or a particular product.

The drug store was another common corner commercial establishment. Cities in their beginnings were very dirty, crowded places and disease was frequently a problem. In 1885, for example, 80,000 Chicagoans died from a cholera and typhoid outbreak that occurred due to contamination of the city's water supply. Doctors at that time were not the trusted physicians we know today due to the limited knowledge of the field and the often painful and sometimes experimental treatments used by doctors at that time. Instead the pharmacist at the corner drug store was a trusted source when sickness befell a city resident.

Chain stores also contributed to the vast number of corner stores sprinkled within neighborhoods. While the idea of the chain store has its beginnings in the 1600s, these types of businesses didn't begin their rapid growth until before and after the Civil War. Successful store owners quickly realized that they could expand their customer base and increase profits by opening similar stores throughout a city and possibly throughout the country. One example was the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Co, which saw its beginnings in 1859 as a single tea store in New York City. The owners, George F Gilman and George Huntington Hartford were able to enjoy a large profit margin by importing tea from the Far East at a very low cost which enabled them to open more and more stores throughout New York and, later expand westward. They also expanded their product selection to other food items and, by 1930, there were 16,000 A & P grocery stores across the U.S.

Decline of the corner store

Corner stores were a constant and prominent feature of urban neighborhoods up until the 1920s and 1930s when post-war food costs increased and caused markets to become larger to rationalize these higher expenses. The rapid increase in car ownership also meant that more and more city residents were suburbanizing and no longer supporting small businesses in dense neighborhoods. In 1930, the first supermarkets began to emerge. These were indicated by offering parking, requiring self-service and were very large, offering a wide variety of products. After World War II, supermarkets became the dominant source for goods due to advances in food refrigeration, processing and packaging which enabled food to be shipped more easily and farther distances.

Italianate Commercial Architecture

Italianate architecture was prevalent in the mid- to late-nineteenth century in the United States. Characteristic features of the style include elongated windows with decorative lintels and bracketed cornices or other architectural elements such as door hoods. The style can be found in both residential and commercial examples ranging from high-style to modest vernacular manifestations. The Italianate style adapted well to commercial structures from the period since elaborate cornice lines with brackets and rows of elongated windows embellished with decorative surrounds or lintels could be used to distinguish building facades. The arrangement of facades for commercial buildings were in a two-part design with the lower floor dedicated to the storefront and the upper floors to residential use complimented the Italianate style during the last half of the nineteenth century. Ornate cornice lines separating the storefront from the upper floors were a common feature.

Corner Store Architecture

Corner stores had a simple design that made them not only recognizable but also inviting and warm. Usually set flush with the sidewalk, these buildings often had large glass windows in the front that allowed passersby to see what the store had to offer from the street. The entrances were designed so that there was never a question of where customers come into the store, often set on the corner or directly in the center between the windows. These entrances were usually cut into the building. Awnings frequently extended out over the sidewalk, providing not only a recognizable marker but also a comfortable space to chat with neighbors.

Open storefronts with extensive glazing at the pedestrian level developed as the glass industry was able to produce larger panes of glass. Advances in construction allowed cast iron or stone pillars to be utilized on the ground level to serve as the structure furthering the ability to open the storefront. Recessed entrances with single or double doors are distinguishing feature. Corner commercial buildings often capitalized on the cross street location by having an angled entrance. This condition created a covered entrance to protect customers. Bulkheads, transom windows, mastheads (signboards) are typical architectural features found on commercial buildings from the nineteenth century. Another characteristic of commercial buildings from the period was that they were often occupied by the store proprietor on the second and third floors, or there might be apartments available for rent. Side entrances are common for corner commercial buildings since they allowed access to the upper floors without entering into the commercial space on the first floor.

The interior of these buildings were very practical, with the front entrance opening to the public store area. The family's kitchen was also located on the first floor, which made it possible to prepare family meals while also keeping watch over the shop. The living space and bedrooms were located on the second floor. These buildings usually had a private side entrance for the family or other tenants, as well.

Portland Corner Commercial Buildings

As identified in the Portland Neighborhood Plan (2007), corner commercial buildings are a valuable asset within the Portland neighborhood fabric. The Portland Museum has also compiled

an inventory for the 97 remaining historic corner stores in Portland. Given Portland's beginnings as an independent town, the area developed with resources that were distinct from Louisville. Residents from Portland were not likely to venture to Louisville's markets to obtain groceries and sundry items. Portland developed its own urban fabric complete with corner stores to provide essential goods and services to the neighborhood in an era when residents relied on walking as a principal mode of transportation. The corner stores in Portland served as the urban equivalent to general stores in small towns.

According to Sanborn maps, by 1892 there were 183 corner commercial buildings within the Portland neighborhood. The majority of these buildings were simply labeled as stores, indicated on the Sanborn maps with an "S". Others were labeled with more specific uses such as grocery stores, saloons, drugstores, barbers, bakeries, and even one watch maker. While many of these stores were established along commercial thoroughfares such as Market Street and Main Street, corner commercial stores were also scattered throughout the residential areas of the neighborhood, which was typical for the period.

Given the expansion of Portland's population during the course of the nineteenth century, the need for corner commercial buildings became more prevalent. With residents living further from the central business district, it was expedient to have shops that were located near the dwellings of Portlanders. This was necessary in a period when there were no automobiles and primitive ice boxes were all people had to store food.

According to the Portland inventory of surviving corner commercial structures, the corner commercial building located at 3139 Bank Street was constructed in 1860. There are nine known corner commercial buildings constructed during the period of 1870 to 1879.

2146 Duncan Street	(1870)
124 S. 20 th Street	(1875)
2131 West Market Street	(1875)
800 N. 34 th Street	(1870)
2812 Portland Avenue	(1875)
520 N. 20 th Street	(1875)
2501 Portland Avenue	(1870)
1625 Congress Street	(1875)
2551 W. Market Street	(1876)

For the decade of the 1880s, fifteen corner commercial structures are extant. For the time period of 1890 to 1899, there are twenty-two additional corner stores that still stand in Portland. For the first decade of the twentieth century, there are twenty-nine corner stores surviving in Portland. As accessibility to the automobile increased, fewer corner stores opened in the decade of the 1920s there are just eight corner commercial buildings still extant from this period. For the 1930s, only two corner commercial buildings appear to be intact Portland. Shifts in population, as well as improvements in refrigeration and transportation, decrease the need for corner commercial stores by the mid-twentieth century in Portland which is reflected in the surviving examples of extant corner stores.

Corner commercial structures in Portland have diminished in numbers since the late-nineteenth century. Nearly half of the known 183 buildings in 1892 associated with the corner store property type have been lost. The actual corner commercial activity that occurred at that time is not accurately represented by the now 97 corner store buildings today, considering that many corner buildings had two or more stores operating within them at one time. It should also be taken into account that some parts of Portland were not even developed yet in 1892, such as the entire southwest corner of the neighborhood along Market and Main and the area that is now north of Bank and west of I-64. Additionally, the street grid that is north of I-64 today no longer exists. Approximately eight city blocks have disappeared over the years due to flooding and the construction of the interstate system. Missouri and Water Streets between 33rd and 36th can still be seen today with aerial maps on what is now the Portland Wharf Park. This site was the subject of an intensive archeological investigation, containing many artifacts of 19th century life. This work led to the eventual listing of the site (Portland Proper) on the National Register of Historic Places.

Cavalier Building Significance

The corner commercial building at 2551 W. Market Street which is known as the Cavalier Building (originally the Schneider Grocery Building), is an important example of the corner store property type. Serving the immediate neighborhood originally as a grocery store, the building was purpose built to serve the immediate residential dwellings. When it was constructed in 1876 at the corner of 26th Street and West Market Street, August Schneider's grocery store immediately became the local neighborhood's source for fresh food. Constructed with the characteristic features of a corner store with its open storefront and residence on the upper floors, the building became a neighborhood anchor. The building continued to be occupied by numerous Mom-and-Pop businesses throughout its history which underscores the corner store's importance to the Portland neighborhood. The Italianate architectural style contributes to the historic significance since this style was utilized for commercial buildings from the period, and is one of the remaining structures in Portland that exemplifies this unique property type.

The Cavalier Building serves as a significant surviving corner store example from the early period of the development of the property type in Portland. With its construction in the mid-1870s, it was of the initial corner stores to serve the residential areas of the greater Portland neighborhood. The Cavalier Building is representative of the small scale commercial buildings that were once more common along the residential blocks of Portland which served its residents daily needs.

~~The property also has good archaeological potential, but is recognized that a lot of disturbance has likely taken place on the property from the demolition of the adjacent structures and modifications made to the yard spaces. While there is the possibility of considerable disturbance to the archaeological record, the site does contain high potential for deeply buried archaeological deposits, such as privies, wells, cellars, and cisterns. The discovery of such deposits associated with a 19th century commercial building would have significant research potential. Or it would help us better understand Louisville's and Portland's commercial history. Archaeologists have~~

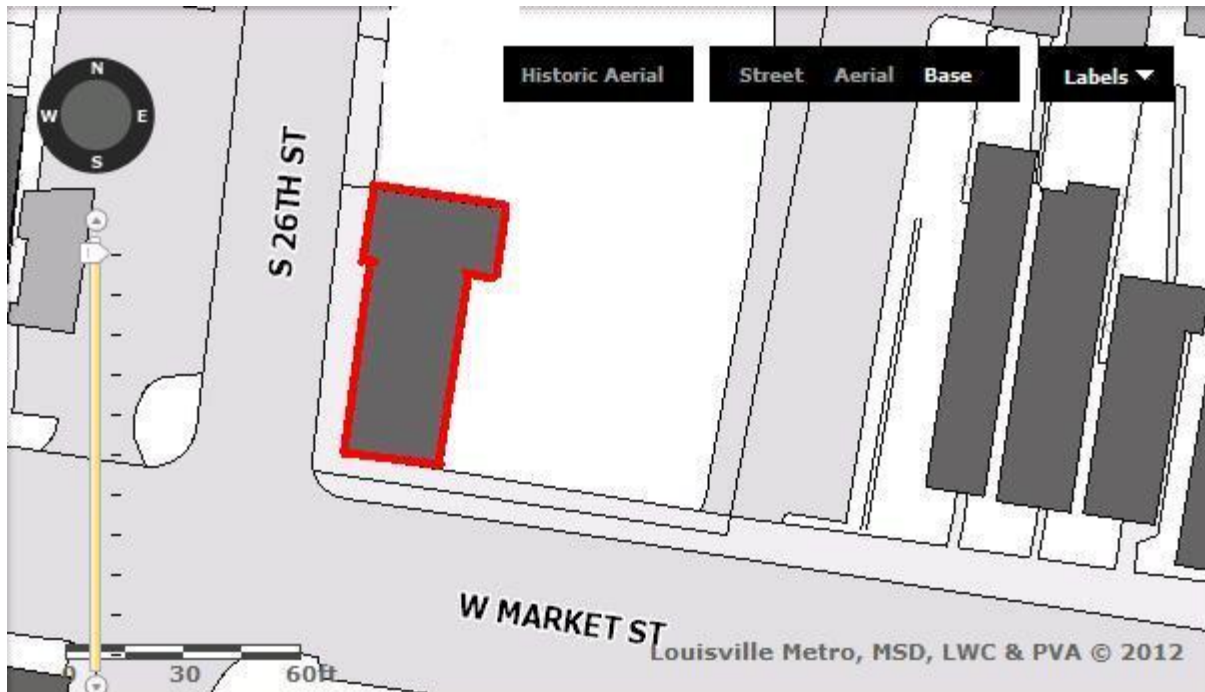
~~conducted numerous investigations within the downtown area including Portland Proper (Stottman and Prybylski 2004), the Russell Neighborhood (Stottman and Watts Roy 1995), the Convention Center site (Stottman 1995), and the Lewis Pottery site (Stradling and Stradling 2001). These sites have produced intact and significant archaeological resources. Based on experiences with urban archaeology in Louisville, historic maps, and the nature of the property's development over time, it is likely that privies, wells, cisterns, foundations, and associated artifacts are present on the property.~~

Integrity Assessment

The Cavalier Building retains its historic form and the location of the building has remained the same. There have been few exterior alterations to the building since it was constructed. The main area of alteration was the installation of circa 1950s windows on the front and west elevations though the historic window openings remain intact. The property has been generally well maintained and is in good condition. The Cavalier Building retains the character-defining features that support the historic significance of the structure as an excellent example of the corner commercial property type in Portland.

Boundary Justification

The building proposed for designation is located at 2551 West Market Street. The proposed boundary for the Local Landmark designation is the exterior perimeter of the extant structure on the parcel. It is described by the Jefferson County Property Evaluation Administrator (PVA) under parcel number 003K00010000. This is the same building that was constructed in 1876 as the A. Schneider & Company Grocers, and is significant as a historic corner store in Portland. The proposed boundaries for the Cavalier Building Individual Local Landmark designation area are denoted by the red lines on the LOJIC base map that follows:



LOJIC Base Map

Sources of Information

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Designation Criteria

In considering the designation of any Neighborhood, Area, Property or Structure in Louisville Metro and Jefferson County as a Local Landmark, or District, the Commission shall apply the following criteria with respect to such Structure, Property or District:

Local Landmark Designation Criteria	Comments	Meets	Does Not Meet
(a) Its character, interest, or value as part of the development or heritage of Louisville Metro, Jefferson County, the Commonwealth, or the United States.	The Cavalier Building is significant for the role it played in the mercantile history of the Portland neighborhood and Jefferson County, and the evolution of its western sector. The building was established as a corner commercial building at an important gateway into Portland where 26 th Street crosses West Market Street. August Schneider built the building to serve as the site of his business, A. Schneider & Company Grocers, as well as being his residence.	X	
(b) Its exemplification of the historic, aesthetic, architectural, archaeological, prehistoric or historic archaeological, educational, economic, or cultural heritage of Louisville Metro, Jefferson County, the Commonwealth, or the nation.	The Cavalier Building (Schneider Building) is an example of the corner store property type that was essential in serving urban residential areas of Portland in a time before automobiles and refrigeration were available. The property also has a potential to contain significant archaeological resources related to the mid-to-late nineteenth-century commercial and residential district of Portland along West Market Street.	X	

(c) Its location as a site of a significant historic event.			X
(d) Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of Louisville Metro, Jefferson County, the Commonwealth, or the nation.			X
(e) Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen.	The significance of the Cavalier Building is derived from the distinctive architectural qualities and particularly those associated with the corner commercial property type of the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Commercial buildings from this period are reflective of the Italianate Style which incorporated cast iron or stone storefronts.	X	
(f) Its identification as the work of an architect, landscape architect, or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of Louisville Metro, Jefferson County, the Commonwealth, or the nation.			X
(g) Its embodiment of elements or architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship, which represents a significant architectural innovation.			X

<p>(h) Its relationship to other distinctive areas, which are eligible for preservation according to a plan based on an historic, cultural, or architectural motif.</p>	<p>The Cavalier building is situated along the West Market Street corridor which is associated with the historic Portland Neighborhood. Two sections of Portland are already listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Portland Historic District was listed in the National Register in 1980. The Portland Wharf District was listed in 2006. The nearby Russell Historic District and Lower West Market Districts are also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Additionally, the U.S. Marine Hospital is a National Historic Landmark. St. Patrick's Cathedral is a Local Landmark. <i>The Portland Neighborhood was also named a Preserve America Community.</i></p> <p>The Portland Neighborhood Plan adopted by Metro Council in 2007 identifies corner commercial buildings as an important historic property type in the neighborhood.</p>	<p>X</p>	
<p>(i) Its unique location or physical characteristics representing an established and familiar visual feature or which reinforce the physical continuity of a neighborhood, area, or place within Louisville Metro.</p>	<p>The Portland Historic District is composed of structures built during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Portland retains much of its historic sense of neighborhood and its nineteenth century origin and development is reflected in its architecture. Critical to the urban fabric of the immediate neighborhood, corner commercial buildings were anchor buildings on residential blocks. The Cavalier Building, which originally served as a grocery later housing drug stores and saloons, is an instantly recognizable feature that reflects a period when residents relied</p>	<p>X</p>	

	on the corner store to provide essential items on a daily basis.		
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Photographs



The South façade of the Cavalier Building (originally the Schneider Building) which illustrates the characteristic store front and upper residential stories.



Corner of 26th Street and West Market showing the South and East elevations.



South and east elevation with ghost image of the feed store evident on the east wall.



West and North elevations including the three side entrances to the residential portions of the building.



Image of the Cavalier Building on the far left with the original Schneider Feed Store building (center) which became Jay's Department Store (now demolished).